Designated Dad

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Designated Dad

by TigerPrawn

Summary

Brie doesn't want to go to school and Aiden has to step up as her new dad.

Notes

A very belated thank you fic for Vix <3

“It’s me,” Aiden announced as he let himself into Hannibal and Will’s house to collect Brie.

She appeared immediately, as she often did when Aiden came to collect her, but instead of running into his arms she walked slowly, head down. And when she got to him she didn’t stop but instead carried on out the door and climbed into the waiting car.

Aiden looked up to see Will had appeared, a concerned expression on his face.

“What’s happened?” Aiden asked. He had only been gone a couple of hours. Brie had said she wasn’t feeling so good and so he had dropped her with her grandfathers before going to get groceries rather than drag her around the aisles. “Is she feeling worse? Did you call the doctor?”

Will shook his head, “I took her temperature earlier and it was fine. I… don’t think she’s feeling poorly.”

Aiden frowned, looking back to the car, Brie sat there waiting and looking forlorn.

“She was a little glum earlier when we had a snack and when I asked her if she was feeling okay, she burst into tears.” Will explained, gently.

“What?” Aiden’s heart broke. “Did she say what was wrong?”

Will shook his head, “No. She just asked me if she has to go to school on Monday. Whether she could come to work at the restaurant instead.”

“Fuck,” Aiden muttered under his breath. He was new to parenthood and he was trying to be the best dad he possibly could be, but sometimes he truly felt out of his depth.

“I told her yes. She’s just the right height to load the dishwasher.” Will said with a smile, to which Aiden glared and Will shook his head. “I’m joking of course. Just talk to her,” Will urged, a hand on Aiden’s shoulder. “I’m sure she’ll open up to you. You’ve got this.”

Aiden clenched his jaw and nodded. “Thanks.”

He took a deep breath before heading to the car and making the silent drive home.

When they arrived at their house, Brie slowly made her way in and then silently up the stairs to her room, instead of running straight to the TV to watch cartoons.

Aiden winced, not wanting to pressure or rush her but also not wanting her to feel alone and sad. He knew all too well how that felt.

He went to the fridge and pulled out the milk, then to the cupboard for the chocolate mix, making her up a glass of her favourite milkshake as he text Nigel.

:: Brie is upset ::

:: About what? Is she okay? ::

Aiden winced.

:: I haven’t asked. I was just making her a milkshake to cheer her up and wanted to wait for you ::

There was a pause for a few moments before Nigel replied again.

:: You’re her dad too now. She loves you. Go talk to her ::

Aiden took a deep breath, anxiety twisting inside him. What if he made things worse? What if she wanted Nigel and not him?

He swallowed, knowing that he just had to suck it up and try. And if she didn’t want him and they had to wait for Nigel, it wouldn’t be personal. Just her being upset. She did love him, he knew that, but Nigel was her real dad.

Aiden took a deep breath, realising that he was making this about him and his fear of her rejecting him as a parent, rather than focusing on what she needed.

:: Okay ::

Aiden finished making the drink and took it up to Brie's bedroom, to find her laying on her bed with her face buried in her pillow.

With a sigh he set down the milkshake on her dresser and sat next to her on the bed, gently rubbing her back.

"Want to talk about it?" He asked quietly.

Aiden was surprised when she sat quickly and grabbed hold of him, holding him tight. He instinctively wrapped his arms around her, wide-eyed with concern.

"Brie, what happened?"

"I don't want to go back to school tomorrow," the words were muffled against his chest.

Something had to have happened at school, and now he thought about it she had seemed kind of quiet when she got home on Friday, but she had been okay since then. Hadn't she?

Maybe she had been a little more subdued than usual. But with such a high energy kid, it was easy to just take slightly less active periods with welcome relief.

"What happened at school?" He urged her. Brie started to shake, crying against him now.

Finally she began to sob out the words, "The other kids were mean. When I said I have a new dad they said you are just the babysitter."

Aiden felt a growl in his chest but kept it locked down. No good would come of any of them getting more worked up over this. And then the thought struck him, she considered him her dad. That melted his heart and he pulled her even tighter to him for just a moment.

"I am your dad, Brie. I will always be here for you. You want me to talk to the teachers?"

Brie pulled back, her eyes wide with panic as she shook her head. "No, I don't want to make a fuss. If they get into trouble they will be even meaner to me."

Aiden's jaw tightened, knowing she was right.

He pulled her close again. "Okay, well, we'll think of something." And then he corrected, "*I'll* think of something. For now, have a milkshake then come help me with dinner and it will all be fine, I promise."

*

Nigel didn't get home until Brie was fast asleep in bed. Aiden hadn't even realised how late it had gotten until Nigel walked into the kitchen and stopped, not expecting to see Aiden sat at

the table with the fabric glitter pens Brie had gotten for her birthday.

“Is this to do with what’s up with Brie?” Nigel asked, eyeing Aiden curiously as he went to the fridge and grabbed them both a beer. He popped the caps then passed one to Aiden.

With a sigh Aiden sat back to reveal what he’d been working on.

“Some mean kids at school told her I wasn’t her dad.”

“Fuckers,” Nigel muttered.

That pulled a chuckle from Aiden, whose back ached and eyes hurt. He’d been doing this for hours now, he was sure. First finding a plain t-shirt in his wardrobe that was presentable enough. Then finding the pens and making sure they hadn’t dried up. He’d tested out the pens, lettering and size on some paper before finally committing it to fabric.

Aiden looked up at Nigel who was nodding appreciatively now.

“You’re always a fabulous artist.” Nigel teased, and Aiden huffed a chuckle.

“Just want to make sure everyone is on the same page.” Aiden said, stretching his arms out and hearing way too many bones crack.

“Come on gorgeous, let’s get you to bed and I’ll rub your shoulders.” Nigel urged before wriggling his brows at Aiden, who was more than happy to comply.

*

The next morning Aiden still ached, but he also felt a swell of pride.

Not at the accomplishment of being able to expertly write on a t-shirt with fabric glitter pens, but at the way Brie’s eyes had brightened when she had seen what he’d done.

As he pulled up along from the school, Brie was almost too eager to get to the gates, rushing to try and get her belt off.

“Come on dad,” She called out to Aiden as he let her out of the car. Her loudness turned a couple of heads and there were a few smiles there. And he was smiling too, beaming at her calling him that.

He locked the car and she was back at his side, eager and grabbing his hand. He had to tug her back a couple of times so that he didn’t get pulled off his feet. They got a few more looks then, more smiles from other parents.

And Brie was beaming, happily showing him off as much as she possibly could. Even asking the other children that they passed if they had met him yet.

“This is Aiden, my new dad.”
“Have you met my new dad?”
“This is my new dad, he’s awesome.”

When they were finally at the gates and all the parents stood there, releasing their children into the school's care, she let go of his hand. Her smile made his heart swell and she shouted back to him, "See you tonight dad!"

He stood there and watched her go, watching as she climbed the steps to the school with a bounce in her step.

His back might ache now, but it was totally worth it to be able to wear a t-shirt with large glittery letters saying, "Hi, I'm Brie's New Dad."

Because sometimes that's the sort of things dads needed to do for their kids.

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